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# THE STAR OF THE EAST

ക്രിസ്തീയ മാസിക

an ecumenical journal dealing  
specially with the oriental and  
eastern orthodox churches.

P. O. Box 98, Kottayam – 686 001, Kerala, India.

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the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

SOPHIA CENTRE, ORTHODOX SEMINARY, P. B. 98,  
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## **The W. C. C.-Target of Concerted Attack from the Right**

Wherever else the WCC may have failed, it is today succeeding at one point—that of evoking heavy criticism from the economic-political right. The World Council can congratulate itself that both in the U. S. A. and in Western Europe, the criticism has been steadily increasing since 1975.

At the Nairobi Assembly there was some reason for the rightists to think that they had scored a point and brought the non-Catholic ecumenical movement under conservative Euro-American Control. Obviously the Programme to Combat Racism and the Church and Society sub-units did not quite die at Nairobi. Under the leadership of some western church leaders it was at least possible at Nairobi to discuss openly the problem of religious liberty and other human rights in socialist countries and to set up bodies to examine this issue. But post-Nairobi progress in this human rights business has not yielded the ammunition that the right-wring had hoped to receive, for use against the socialist countries.

On the contrary, in the post Nairobi period, the campaign for the liberation of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia has in fact gained even greater momentum in the WCC. Some had hoped that the bifurcation of responsibility for socio-economic questions between the Churches' Commission for Participation in Development (CCPD) and Church and Society, would make the sub-unit on Church and Society a forum where western interests like Science-based Industrial Society could be pursued without too much "Third World" interference. They too have been disappointed. The fact that CCPD has developed, in collaboration with the Urban Rural Mission (URM) an ideology of identification with the poor in the context of local skirmishes and local development, has not pre-empted Church and Society from dealing with the justice issue in its own way.

The South African Government used a good bit of money to mount a major attack on the WCC immediately before the Jamaica Central Committee in January 1979. Quite apart from the Muldergate Scandals and the allegations that much of the money spent by the right-wing white racist minority government of South Africa for anti-WCC propaganda found their way into various individual pockets, just as in Kenya at the Nairobi Assembly, so also in West Germany before Jamaica, the local Church press had also been subventioned to launch the attack, which whitewashed itself as a defence of European theology and European Christianity.

Now the volley of fire comes from U. K. and U. S. A. – at a more respectable academic level. Dean E. R. Norman's *Christianity and the World Order* comes out of Cambridge University, U. K. Dr. Ernest W. Lefever's *Amsterdam to Nairobi- The W. C. C. and the Third World* has the prestige of being authored by the Director of Ethics and Public Policy Center sponsored by Georgetown University in Washington D. C.

Neither of the two books merit a detailed refutation from those who know the ecumenical movement better, because the charges are flimsy, flippant, and largely uninformed. What is important to note is how as the W. C. C. begins to become somewhat more effective (it is far from successful in this regard) than before in exposing the pattern of injustice in the world, the beneficiaries of that pattern who had previously sworn by the WCC now talk as if they were its sworn enemies.

Lefever is the kind of thinker who would support the use of armed violence against the North Koreans or against the Japanese on the occasion of Pearl Harbor but would advocate only patient, peaceful, lawful efforts against South Africa or Rhodesia, for both of whose minority white racist Governments he has a soft corner. He would much rather see the WCC support Muzorewa and Mrs. Thatcher in the Zimbabwe issue.

These are intelligent people, and obviously well-financed (free copies of Lefever's book seemed to be plentiful). There may not be any obvious connection between the South African financed German attack and the present Anglo-American attack. The conclusion is difficult to avoid, however, that these are not sporadic shots, that the world establishment is finding the W. C. C. a major threat to its privileged position, and that the W. C. C. has some reason to congratulate itself in having been chosen to be the target of such attacks. Will it also have the wisdom, courage and strength to take seriously the consequences of that conclusion?

# Dialogue With World Religions-- Basic Approaches and Practical Experiences.

(Paul Gregorios)

This paper seeks only to attempt a preliminary answer to three simple questions related to Christians engaging in dialogue with people of other faiths and religions.

I. What theological and practical considerations lead us to undertake dialogue with people of other faiths and religions?

II. In what spirit, with what attitudes and expectations should we as Christians enter into dialogue with people of other faiths and religions?

III. What important lessons can be learned from the experience so far in dialogue with people of other faiths and religions?

In answering these questions, we should take into account the problems created by

- (a) theological differences between Christians
- (b) sociologial and cultural differences between various situations.

This paper has been written from the theological background of the Orthodox Tradition, but with some sympathy and understanding for the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions as well. The background of the writer of this paper is one of a Christian minority amidst a preponderant Hindu majority, and a Muslim minority that is at least five times as large as the total Christian community, not to mention the Sikhs who are almost as numerous as the Christians, and various other smaller minorities like Buddhists, Jews, Parsis, Jains etc. But an effort will be made here to look at the issue of dialogue with people of other religions from the perspective of post-Christendom Europe and America.

## 1. Theological Considerations.

The tone for the western Christian approach to unbelievers was, perhaps set by Augustine of Hippo. When Nectarius of Calama wrote to him about the contradiction between Augustine's assertion

that man can do good deeds only through the grace of God in Christ, and the common experience that unbelieving pagans sometimes do show forth some splendid virtues, Augustine's reply to Nectarius was simply that the virtues of the pagans were but splendid vices!

If we were to say the same thing about the many instances of unbelievers in our secular society sometimes putting Christians to shame by their superior spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice, we would be regarded as bigotted and narrow-minded. We cannot write off a Gandhi or a Marx or a Lenin as simply pagans with splendid vices. Augustine's loyalty to the doctrine of an exclusive grace that comes to Christians alone for the doing of good deeds goes both against our experience and the spirit of our age.

But a similar exclusivism and bigotry was more recently manifested by reputable modern Protestant theologians like Karl Barth and Hendrik Kraemer. Ever since Tambaram 1938, Protestant Christians who wanted to engage in dialogue with people of other faiths, found themselves inhibited by the contention that God's Revelation comes only to Christians, and that others were so totally or almost totally in error that there was no point in talking to them.

I do not know of any respectable Roman Catholic theologians who revived Augustinian intolerance in that virulent a form. Theologians like Karl Rahner, with a broad-minded Existentialist, neo-Thomist orientation have been quite open to the possibility that other religions can be a positive factor in the understanding of divine revelation:

“The divinely intended means of salvation for the individual meet him within the concrete religion of his actual existential milieu and historical contingency, according to God's will and forbearance (which so intermingle, that they are no longer clearly separable”).<sup>1</sup>

The position stands in stark contrast with Karl Barth's dictum in the *Kirchliche Dogmatic*, 1/2 para 17:2 entitled *Religion als Unglaube*:

“Wir beginnen mit dem Satz: Religion ist Unglaube; Religion ist eine Angelegenheit, man muss geradezu sagen: *die Angelegenheit des gottlosen Menschen*”.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Karl Rahner, “Christianity and Non-Christian Religion” in *The Church: Readings in Theology*, New York, J. P. Kennedy and Sons, 1963. p. 129

2- German Text I/2 (1945 edn) p. 327. English Text:  
“We begin by stating that religion is unbelief- It is a concern, indeed we must say that it is *the one great concern*, of godless man”- I/2 pp- 299-300

The context for this imperious intolerance against religion is not simply the fact that the fight against liberalism would permit no loophole through which some kind of "natural revelation" would get in. More illuminating is the fact that the Jerusalem international missionary conference had posed the problem of mission and unbelief in that peculiar form. According to one rather liberal but influential Anglo-American faction at Tambaram, the enemy was secularism with its denial of God and Revelation, and all those opposed to secularism should join hands in combatting the sprawling monster of secularism. This meant that the appeal of Jerusalem would be that Christian missionaries join hands with the adherents of other religions in fighting the common enemy—secularism. The issue was only raised and not resolved at Jerusalem 1930. It was only in Tambaram, India 1938, that the battle was really joined between the Anglo-Americans under the leadership of Anglican Richey Hogg identifying the enemy as secularism, and the continental theologians under the leadership of the Dutch Reformed Hendrik Kraemer locating the enemy as these other religions so full of human error, superstition and ignorance. For Kraemer, it would be fatal for Christianity to ally itself with the other religions. Secularism is less of an enemy than these religions. It was this line that Kraemer's disciple Theodore Van Leeuwen further developed in his *Christianity in World History*, where the argument is that secularization is God's action, that it is the form in which the Gospel goes on, and that the World Religions which have resisted the Christian mission will not be able to stand up against the sweeping torrent of secularization.<sup>3</sup>

Van Leeuwen was not against all non-European cultures. If only these cultures would rid themselves of the obnoxious religious element, then Van Leeuwen would be very charitable towards other cultures:

"Once the religious myth has been blown away,  
there is room for the traditions of the non-  
Christian cultures to bring forth their treasures".<sup>4</sup>

Some of my Hindu friends detect a highly reprehensible element of European cultural arrogance in such a statement. What it says to him is in effect "Oh yes, once you are sufficiently trained in our western secular civilization and you shed your Hindu religious identity we will co-opt you into a world civilization which will of course be dominated by European secularised culture".

Whatever theological or other reasons we as Christians may have for engaging in dialogue with people of other faiths, we should

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3. The A. T. Van Leeuwen, *Christianity in World History*, Edinburgh, 1964. see esp. pp. 411 ff

4. op. cit. p. 419

be explicit and honest about them. If we are engaging in dialogue with the secret intention of converting them, as many religious people in Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism suspect, then our partner is bound to be wary and our dialogue inauthentic.

The attempt here is merely to present first the Christian theological basis for dialogue with all human beings, and then to advance a few simple arguments why we should begin dialogue without much more dilly-dallying with theoretical reflection.

It is not necessary in this connection to start with any concept of *Uroffenbarung* as Paul Althaus<sup>5</sup> does, distinguishing it from *Christusoffenbarung*. Neither does it seem essential to follow the line of Carl Heinz Ratschow, and posit some kind of *Hervortreten* or stepping forth of God which is then regarded as being apprehended by people of other religions. One can approach people of other religions without any presuppositions about General or Original Revelation or about the salvific values of other religions.

The basic theological position may be set forth thus:

Christ is the first-born of creation, the head of all created reality. He loves not only all men, but also all that is created. I am united to Christ in Baptism and Chrismation. My mind is the mind of Christ. Therefore my love is non-exclusive and open to the whole creation. Nothing is alien or threatening. Love and compassion for the whole creation is the characteristic of Christ. The Church as His body shares in this love and compassion. I as a member of that body have to express that love and compassion in faithfulness, integrity and openness with sympathetic understanding. This is sufficient and compelling reason for me to engage in dialogue with people of other faiths. It is love in Christ that sends me to dialogue.

It seems that this is quite sufficient theological basis for dialogue. If you want additional arguments, here are a few:

- (a) If dialogue with "secular" man is justified on the ground that he is my neighbour, then "religious" man is also equally my neighbour and I must communicate with him.
- (b) If theology has as its task the understanding of what God does in the world and how he deals with human beings, then we must know something about man's present state as created, fallen and redeemed. Such an understanding of man cannot be built upon knowing European or Christian man alone. The vast majority of humanity belong to other religions and what they experience and aspire for should be part of our knowledge of humanity. Present western theology is defective precisely

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5. P. Althaus, *Die Christliche Wahrheit*, Bd. I & II, Gutersloh, 1947.

because of its defective and partial understanding of what constitutes humanity. Dialogue can help in remedying this defect.

- (c) What God does in history cannot be confined to Christians alone. How Christ has affected people who are not members of the Christian Church is an important aspect of God's action. The great religions of the world have been profoundly affected by exposure to the person and teachings of Christ. This work of God can be understood only in patient and trusting dialogue with people of other faiths.
- (d) There is some truth in the statements of some liberal theologians like Ernst Troeltsch who advocated "replacement of missionary attacks on the other world religions by cross-fertilisation" for cultural exchange and mutual stimulation. This need not be based, as it was in the case of liberalism, on some value-neutral acceptance of the empirically given without any overriding criterion of judgement. As one exposes oneself to people of other religions, one's own judgemental criteria are transformed. One's understanding of Christianity itself can be changed. It may not be so unwise to follow Paul Tillich's advice to use the knowledge of other religions as a means "to penetrate into the depth of one's own religion, in devotion, thought and action".

"In the depth of every religion there is a point at which religion itself loses its importance, and that to which it points breaks through its particularity, elevating it to spiritual freedom, and with it to a vision of the spiritual presence in other expressions of the ultimate meaning of man's existence. This is what Christianity must see in present encounter of the world religions<sup>6</sup>".

In other words dialogue with other religions strengthens and stimulates our Christian faith.

- (e) The Christian Church is an instrument of God for bringing humanity together in unity, creativity and righteousness. Such a unity can neither impose uniformity nor condone unrighteousness. It means a critical reconciliation of opposed elements in such a way that their creative possibilities are enhanced and released. What we are looking for is more than what the late Prof. R.C. Zaehner recommended—namely the transition from a mere convergence towards a "Concordant Discord".<sup>7</sup> What we

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6. P. Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions*, Columbia University Press, New York, & London, 1963.

7. See R. C. Zaehner, *The Convergent Spirit*, Oxford, 1963 where he saw the religions moving towards a common point and his later, (1968-69 Gifford Lectures) *Concordant Discord, The Interdependence of Faiths*,

need is more like what Pannenberg recommends—the development of a Tradition that is rich in its diversity, conscious of its incompleteness, and always “open for the future in an unlimited way”. The Christian Church has to play its role as a unifying force among the various discordant elements in humanity. Religion is one of the most deeply rooted of these elements that divided man from man. By putting them into dialogue with each other, the Church would be contributing towards a rich and diverse creative unity of humankind.

One last word about the theological position. Roman Catholic Theology itself has recently moved from what may be called the “proportion of truth” approach to other religions which characterized the theology of the Vatican II decree on non-Christian religions. We cannot simply say that the Church has 100% of the Truth while other religions have varying proportions or percentages of the Truth. God is Truth. Christ is Truth. The truth liberates, but it cannot be objectified and quantified. The new approach in Roman Catholic theology seems to be based on “the universal salvific will of God”. This is reflected in Karl Rahner’s writings as well as in the article of Fr. Eugene Hilman in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*.

“Every religion serves God’s saving propose in history, insofar as it offers its followers an awareness of their own inadequacies before God even when God may be only a suspected influence behind the immediate questions of human destiny. Every religious act is a saving act, insofar as it directs persons to a greater love for one another”.<sup>8</sup>

Fr. Hilman does not assert that one religion is as good as another. Neither does he think that we have reliable criteria for evaluating “the comparative salutary and humanizing value of the countless religions of the world”. He is in fact simply reviving an earlier Protestant approach—the *praeparatio evangelica approach*, when he states:

“The fathers of Vatican II have clearly taken the position that non-Christian religions should be regarded at least as preparations for humanity’s reception of the Gospel. Are these religions perhaps related to Christianity in somewhat the same

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Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970 (46pp) where he advocates moving from “discordant concord” to ‘concordant discord’: Zaehner strikes the non-Christian as being a bit too imperialistic in his oversimplified handling of other religions and in his eagerness to show Christianity as superceding all religions.

8. Vol- 12: No: 4 (1974) E. Hilman, “Evangelization in a Wider Ecumenism: Theological grounds for Dialogue with other religions” pp. 2—12

way that John the Baptist was related to Jesus, or as Christians believe the Old Testament is related to the New?"<sup>9</sup>

This approach which was characteristic of enlightened Protestant missionary policy in the pre-Tambaram days, was found to be too patronizing to be acceptable to non-Christians. Even Raimundo Panikkar's *Unknown Christ of Hinduism* is offensive to sensitive and intelligent Hindus, for in claiming what is good in Hinduism for Christ, Christians are being imperialistic, patronizing and superior, as the Hindu sees them. Fr. Panikkar's statement that Christ came "to bring to its fullness every religion of the world" is seen as the "Christianity—the Crown of all Religions" kind of haughtiness.

The other Roman Catholic approach, based on "the universal salvific will of God", is exemplified by H. S. Schlette and Piet Schoonenberg. Their position is that since Man is a historic being by nature, God's salvific will must also be historical—i. e. not limited to specific moments and individuals in history, but operating in history, as a whole (This is also the Pannenberg line). From this they go on to argue that God is actively being revealed to non-Christians through their historical religions. The line of Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan seems to be similar—the grace of God is universally operative and open to all human beings; in all our knowing and willing we are reaching out towards reality and thus to the Infinite Transcendent. Religion is an explicit reaching out to the Infinite and that procures special grace. The various experiences of this special grace are then socially objectified and systematized into organized religion, since man is a social being.

But most of these theologians, when pressed, may deny that the religions have full salvific value: they are at best partial and preparatory. They would agree with Protestant theologians that Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation.

The position of this paper is that it is not necessary to raise and resolve these questions before engaging in dialogue. Christian love is a sufficient and compelling basis for entering into dialogue. There are other reasons of a more pragmatic nature which push us into dialogue. This conclusion is extremely important for what follows in the next section.

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9. Fr. Schoonenberg is more cautious and holds that religion is only one of the many forms of historical experience. See his "The Church and Non Christian Religions" in D. Flanagan(ed), *The Meaning of the Church*, Dublin, 1966 pp. 89—109. H. R. Schlette is more categorical in asserting that God reveals himself in other religions. See his *Towards a Theology of Religions*, New York, 1965 and his *Colloquium salutis-Christien und nicht-Christen heute*, Cologne, 1965.

If we pose any doctrine of God's universal salvific will, we have two problems on our hand. What is the role of Christ's incarnation in it? In what way do Christians share in this that others don't?

## II. Spirit, Attitudes and Expectations

The spirit in which one approaches people of other faiths is decisive for the outcome. This spirit is negatively and positively influenced by our attitudes and expectations.

If your basic expectation is eventually to convert your partner in dialogue to the Christian faith, it will certainly entail certain attitudes and approaches on your part and certain inhibitions on the part of your partner which could make dialogue self-defeating. It is true that many of our friends in the other religions already suspect Dialogue to be another devious technique of evangelization. Dialogue cannot be an alternative for Mission or Evangelism.

Personally, I do not like to use the terminology of Mission, since it is associated in my mind with western colonialism and imperialism. This paper would prefer therefore to speak about the relation between Dialogue and Evangelisation.

In religious dialogue two or more human beings meet each other, with mutual trust and openness, each respecting the convictions of the other; the object is to understand each other in their varying religious traditions, and to be mutually helped in one's own grasp of the truth.

In Evangelisation the baptized believer in the Crucified and Risen Christ speaks to the unbeliever, on behalf of Christ and His Church, to declare the good news that in Christ Jesus, God calls all men into the Kingdom through faith, repentance, baptism and the Christian life.

Evangelisation is accompanied by signs of the Kingdom—acts of love and compassion, miracles of faith, symbolic acts repudiating the values of the world and manifesting the values of the Kingdom. But these acts should not be called evangelisation. Evangelisation is proclamation, annunciation, declaration of the good news that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and is made the Master and Lord of all creation.

Evangelization is a charisma—a gift of the Spirit (Eph. 4:11). No charisma except love is common to all members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27–30, 1 Cor. 12:19). Evangelism is the task of those who are endowed with that particular charism. It should not be engaged in by people without the gift. Indiscriminate preaching by self-proclaimed evangelists has proved itself to be counter-productive in our time.

Dialogue and Evangelisation are both tasks of the Church. Dialogue is not specifically mentioned in the New Testament. But it too is a charisma of the Holy Spirit for our time. The Evangelist does the work of evangelisation in the name of Christ as a member of the Body of Christ. The Christian engaging in dialogue with people of other religions also does so in the name of Christ and as a member of the Body of Christ.

It is conceivable that the same person has the gift for dialogue and the gift for evangelism. Judging from experience however, such instances are rather rare. Both are tasks of the Church, and the Church does not abandon one because she is engaged in the other. By beginning dialogue with people of other faiths, the Church does not give up evangelisation. But in both she maintains integrity and honesty. She does not use dialogue as a means of evangelisation. When she, through her chosen and gifted members, enters into dialogue with people of other religions, she exposes herself to the risk that these members may be influenced by the people of other religions. Being so influenced is normal in any undertaking that involves exchange and communication.

In engaging in dialogue with people of other religions, the Christian keeps in mind the following principles:

- (1) One does not hide one's own faith; one is not ashamed to confess one's faith when called upon to do so in dialogue.
- (2) One does not, however, use dialogue as a means of persuading one's non-Christian partner to become a Christian.
- (3) One does not approach dialogue with any sense of superiority. One is quite happy, as a Christian, to put oneself on a level with one's dialogue partners, as members of the same humanity.
- (4) One is genuinely interested in the life, faith, and aspirations of one's dialogue partner. One respects the other's convictions, and tries to understand the other positively wherever possible.
- (5) At those points where one has to be critical of the partner's convictions, one does not hide one's mind, but expresses the criticism with love, respect and courtesy. Dialogue should always be in love and truth, not in fear and dissimulation.
- (6) In dialogue one accepts the possibility that one's own views may be radically changed by the dialogue. Only mature people who are not afraid of exposing oneself to persuasive presentations of other people's religious views should engage in dialogue.

- (7) In preparation for dialogue one should make a study of the religious scriptures, customs, ritual writings, practices etc., of the dialogue partner, whenever and to whatever degree possible.
- (8) Dialogue cannot be a single act. It is a process of living together in openness to each other and genuinely growing together into a deeper understanding of reality.
- (9) Dialogue may lead to practical consequences—perhaps to work together in a specific field or in a particular project; perhaps to manifest inter-communal harmony in some public way, perhaps to issue joint statements, articles, publications etc..
- (10) Dialogue begun should not be broken abruptly. If abruptly broken the resulting relation is usually worse than what it was before dialogue began.

### III. Lessons from Past Experience.

1. Bilateral dialogue is always easier to handle than multilateral dialogue. When representatives of two religions speak to each other one may find that it is possible to agree on many points and to state the agreement in commonly acceptable terminology. But when several different religions are present, the task becomes difficult. If, for example, Orthodox Buddhists are present, it may be difficult to use God-language. If Muslims or Jews are present certain concepts like the unity of God and Man ("I and the Father are one", "that they all may be one in us" etc.) cannot be freely discussed with adherents of eastern religions.

Experience shows that bilateral dialogues should be more frequent and numerous, whereas multilateral religious dialogue should be a comparatively rarer phenomenon. Multilateral dialogue can be used to survey the experience of bilateral dialogues and to improve techniques, preparation and conduct of bilateral dialogues. Multilateral dialogue can also be used for promoting inter-communal harmony.

2. The deepest levels of communication between religions takes place at the level of spirituality and worship. There are three basic levels:

- (a) dialogue on common social or economic problems and about common projects and practical collaboration;
- (b) dialogue on the theoretical or theological aspects of religion;
- (c) dialogue in which (a) and (b) are transcended into the realm of entering into each other's spiritual experience and group worship.

The level of skill and preparation required is higher as one moves from (a) to (b) to (c). Quite obviously (b) level is advisable only when the participants are theologically or theoretically trained. It is unproductive to have a theological discussion among the theoretically untrained. Even more skill and confidence are required when entering into the partner's spiritual experience. It is possible to enter into a Muslim's or Hindu's experience of worship without compromising one's own faith. A Christian's worship can be directed only to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So when a Christian enters the worship experience of a Muslim who prays to Allah, it becomes necessary for the Christian to enter sympathetically into his worship of Allah as in fact identical with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are important theological problems here which have not yet been sorted out. To whom are the Christian's prayers directed? Can it be to the same God as the Muslim prays to?

Is the identity of the God to whom my prayers or the prayers of a Muslim are directed dependent on his or my conceptual understanding of that God? If I identify the true destination of the Muslim's prayers as the same God the Father whom Christians worship, does that imply my recognition that Muslim prayers are also authentic?

The problem becomes more complicated in the case of Hindu worship involving idols; even more problematic is Buddhist worship which does not include the idea of God at all.

These theological problems notwithstanding, experience shows that participation in each other's spiritual experience can be a deep and meaningful experience of dialogue.

This point of view, that encounter at the level of spirituality is more rewarding than theoretical dialogue was ably put forward by the former Swiss Ambassador to New Delhi and Athens, Jacques Albert Cuttat (*The Encounter of Religions*). Ambassador Cuttat actively promoted such dialogue in India and Sri Lanka with some remarkable results.

Similar approaches have been practiced also by people like Swami Abhishiktananda, by Murray Rogers and by Fr. Bede Griffiths among others. Fr. Griffiths has published his conclusions in an interesting book called *Closer to the Centre*, where he argues that the closer you are to Christ, the less divisive appear the differences between Christians and adherents of other religions.

On the other hand to many Christians whose hold on the Christian faith is primarily intellectual-theological, such encounter at the level of spirituality appears rather threatening. The fear of syncretism is often advanced as an argument against attempting such encounters. This fear is not experienced by Christians who are

spiritually secure like Fr. Bede Griffiths. If our faith is threatened in dialogue with people of other religions, that seems to be an indication that our faith is either insufficient or inauthentic.

3. The experience of dialogue has taught us that not everyone profits from it the same way. People who are emotionally and spiritually secure, who have a genuine desire to "fuse their horizons" (to borrow a phrase from Gadamer) with people of other religions and cultures are best suited to dialogue and derive most profit from it. Recent converts and those whose faith is still precarious or unformed may suffer from exposure to dialogue. It is therefore important for the Churches to prepare people who are spiritually deep, emotionally mature, strong and secure in faith, and endowed with the spirit of compassion and openness towards the whole of humanity, to participate in dialogue with similar people in other religions.

4. Dialogue requires special skills in certain special situations. e. g. Dialogue between western Christians and the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt or the Ananda Marga of Hindus would be exceedingly difficult, and may give undue recognition to a fascist communal group which will extend its influence through such recognition. But Dialogue between the World Council of Churches, the World Buddhist Council or World Council of Mosques may be of a different kind. Western Christians engaging in dialogue with a Saudi Muslim organization or Muammar Gaddafi's Muslim spokesman would have to keep in mind the fact that these partners are actively engaged in financing anti-Christian activities in Philippines or Malaysia or elsewhere. Yet a carefully planned dialogue may help to ease tension even between Jews and Muslims.

# Orthodox theology and Pagan culture

## —A Tribute to St. Basil

St. Basil was one of the best educated persons of his time, second to none, Christian or pagan, in sheer erudition. Not only that, St. Basil sent his disciples to study with the best masters of the time—be they Christian or pagan. He sent many students from Cappadocia to study with Libanius, the leading pagan Sophist and Rhetorician of his day.<sup>1</sup> Libanius was so much an admirer of St. Basil that the quality of both men shine out of their letters despite the sophistry of the pagan :

### Libanius to Basil:

“Behold I have sent you a speech, all streaming with sweat as I am! How should I be otherwise, when sending my speech to one who by his skill in oratory is able to show that the wisdom of Plato and the ability of Demosthenes were belauded in vain? I feel like a gnat compared with an elephant. How I shiver and shake, as I reckon up the day, when you will inspect my performance! I am almost out of my wits!”<sup>2</sup>

And the equally impressive reply of St. Basil: “I have read your speech and have immensely admired it. O Muses! O Learning! O Athens! What do you not give to those who love you! What fruits do not they gather who spend even a short time with you! Oh for your copiously flowing fountain! What men all who drink of it are shown to be! I seemed to see the man himself in your speech, in the company of his chattering little woman. A living story has been inscribed on the ground by Libanius, who alone has bestowed the gift of life on his words!”<sup>3</sup>

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1. See epistle 335 and 337 addressed to Libanius, introducing a student. The debate about the authenticity of the Basil-Libanius correspondence has now subsided, and most scholars regard them as authentic.
2. Epistle 352 (full text). Eng. Tr. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series Two Vol. VIII: p. 325
3. Ep. 353. Greek Text in Roy. J. Deferrari (Ed). *St. Basil, the Letters*, 4 Vols. Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, 1926.

This was not mere rhetoric, for St. Basil despite his sophist training, was resolutely honest and his admiration for the pagan Libanius was sincere, as was Libanius' for Basil. And Libanius had that bold affection towards St. Basil, to say in the preface of a letter requesting the Bishop to help the pagan with some timber rafters from the Pontic Woods for the latter's house construction : "Every bishop is something hard to get something out of" but, in saying so used an expression *pragma dysgripiston* which really means "something hard to fish from". And St. Basil promptly accepts the banter and sends the rafters with a reply that is a rhetorical delight. Basil says in effect "you with your sophistry has fished out from the depths of Plato the fish that you wanted and that it is Basil who is impaled on the rafters".

This was not just rhetorical playing with words, but out of genuine respect for what was good among the pagans. But for St. Basil, faith was necessary to truly test knowledge as he makes clear in his epistle 235 to Amphiliocius of Iconium in his reply to the latter's questions. But the human mind has a double tendency, one for evil and one for good, one for the false and another for the true. Right judgment is possible with the aid of God's spirit ; but even this judgment is but partial, even when it is true. The mind can know; but it has limits.<sup>4</sup> There is nothing bad about knowing as such. And pagan knowledge is not forbidden to the Christian.

But the Christian has to have the special capacity for the discernment of the good. There is no objective criteria that can be publicly and generally applied to pagan knowledge. The discernment is a gift that comes with growth in grace.

Yet growth in grace does not automatically bring this power of discernment. It comes with internal freedom and integrity. Some people may be far advanced in forms of piety which to us look like growth in grace, and yet their judgments about outside reality may be quite ignorant and prejudiced. It was St. Basil's acquired knowledge, when combined with his growth in grace and integrity, that gave him the freedom and the power to know what is good outside the Church and to be fearless in its appreciation. Much of our present day theology is so culturally insular and so uninformed about reality outside the Church, about other cultures and other religions, other philosophical perspectives and religious experiences.

This is especially true of much Orthodox theology which claims to be patterned after the style of St. Basil. We have all to become much more open and unafraid, if we are to make the vibrant splendour of Orthodox theology hum and shine again.

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4. Ep. 234, 235

# Are God and Man One or Two?

## Reflections on the Secular Temptation

(PAUL GREGORIOS)

In a world progressively swept by the winds of secularization, the question becomes increasingly important for those who want to maintain their faith in God, to see him more and more clearly identified with the process of history and with the destiny of man.

In the West at least there are two basic paradigms of the God-world relation which represent the two poles of western thought. At one extreme is the Spinozan paradigm, where God's substance is the world, and the world is God. At the other stands the Augustinian-Kierkegaardian or Barthian tradition which makes God and world so 'totally other' mutually, that God shares in none of the characteristics of the world and is totally transcendent. Nothing in the world can in this view, be divine. The world is even not necessary to God, not to say that it cannot be his being or his body. The world, including man is *created, ex nihilo*; both concepts are meant to emphasize the generic difference between God and world or God and Man. God's being is necessary (essential), eternal, perfect, immutable, self-generating, while the world's being is contingent, temporal, imperfect, changing, other-generated.

In between these two poles there has developed the conception of the 'secondary autonomy of man', in this sense that while man or the human being remains always a creature (i. e. he does not have his being *a se* or from himself), he has it *in se* (in himself) and *per se* (by itself). This means that while he always owes his being to God as First Cause, he can now exist in himself and by himself, and can therefore become a secondary cause within the limits of his nature, generating effects in the outside world. Secondary causes can of course be suppressed, over-ridden, or kept in abeyance by the First Cause. In traditional western thought this is what constitutes a miracle. But nature has its own autonomy and we can discern the rules that govern its functionings under normal non-miraculous circumstances. That is in fact the realm of science and philosophy, according to this line of thinking.

Modern western philosophy and science which exist in a mutually reinforcing relation to the process of secularization, have philosophical presuppositions which are basically Deist. They do not presume to deny the existence or being of God as First Cause. They are primarily interested, however, in the realm of secondary causes, which can be explained, by and large, in terms of themselves, without reference to a necessary First Cause.

The trend in the west today is to accommodate God himself within this concept of the autonomy of man and nature. This is the "secular meaning of the Gospel" (Paul van Buren), and in fact of "the Death of God" (Vahanian, Altizer, et al). But it is also in some ways the effort of some Catholic theologians like Schillebeeckx (*God, the Future of Man*) where the concept of God is accommodated into the secular time-frame of human history and human destiny in this world.

This option of bringing God into the realm of secondary causes and domesticating him there as a transcendent ideal for the 'future' of man and the world, seems attractive even to Euro-Communists or Communist renegades like Roger Garaudy. For Garaudy what Marxism lacks is a sufficient idea of transcendence which is necessary to forestall all totalitarian absolutism. No one should say the last word. All concepts and all social forms are to be transcended. No system should be final. So Garaudy claims that Marxism with God as a transcendent ideal for humanity, will be the open system we need.

These modern theological and ideological attempts to domesticate God within the time-frame of the history of man and nature are thus to be commended as noble efforts on the part of some theologians and thinkers to come to terms with, or at least to communicate with "modern secular man" who is supposed to be notoriously anti-metaphysical and hopelessly allergic to any notions of an absolutely transcendent God *a la* Barth or Kierkegaard.

In fact the 'Death of God' Theology of two decades ago insisted that God was dead and that humanity, come of age, (*mundig*) had inherited the universe, being responsible for it on its own. Humanity could no longer be a child, depending on God for decisions. This tragic-heroic stance of having replaced God and taken over from him, often led merely to an almost tragicomic sense of loneliness and despair on the part of humanity, if one did not have some kind of a Marxist hope about history. Western liberalism is today under the cloud of this hopelessness.

What kind of a notion of God can Christians still sustain, after having passed through the cathartic trauma of secularization? This

paper takes the position that the ancient Eastern Patristic God-apprehension remains still valid, with some minor changes, even after the western crisis of secularization and rationalism.

The restatement in modern terms of the ancient Eastern Patristic heritage requires the abandonment of concepts like *adequatio* which have played such a key role in scholastic and post-scholastic western thought.

*Adequatio* is often regarded as referring to “the relation of truth to being”. Here there is already a verbalistic or propositional conception of truth which can hardly be defended philosophically or theologically. If truth is that which truly is and not merely a statement of things as they are, then our question is precisely: the relation of propositions to truth. St. Thomas obviously held the view that “affirmative propositions can be formed truly about God” (Summa Theol: Prima Q: 13 art 12). With that the Eastern Fathers would agree if pressed. But they would not agree with Aquinas that truth is primarily intellectual and therefore, propositional. For Aquinas as for Aristotle, “truth is squaring of thought and thing”, which is of course an act of the mind. As St. Thomas says in Prima: Ques 16: Art 5 “truth is found in the intellect according as it apprehends a thing as it is”, and that (art 7) “the truth of enunciations is no other than the truth of the intellect”. He would even go further to say that “Truth, properly speaking, is only in the intellect”.

The Eastern Fathers, following the Semitic, especially Hebrew, tradition would hold that reality rather than proposition is truth. Therefore, the Eastern Fathers would be skeptical of the truth-content of their own statements. Whatever follows in the rest of this paper should also therefore be regarded, not as attempts to state the truth, but as propositions which may have some value in relating us to the truth. I make six of these propositions and make an effort to clarify them:

(1) God's is-ness is generically different from all other is-ness, and therefore it is dangerous even to say that “God is”, because this may lead to the misunderstanding that God is, in the same way as things are.

Modern rational thought finds it difficult to affirm the “existence” of God, because it understands existence as a generic concept. Things exist in space and time and are open to our perception. If God truly exists, then he must also exist in the same way as things do (somewhere or everywhere, at some time or at all times, ie. in the whole or part of time and space). In

a world come of age<sup>1</sup>, it is difficult to conceive a God who is in a part or in the whole of space-time, and therefore the notion of God as a real existent becomes untenable.

This is the central reality of the western movement of secularisation, unbelief and agnosticism. And it is a concept of God, which regards God as an existent like other existents, that has become untenable. Here I must disagree with Gordon Kaufman of Harvard who holds that “a naturalistic or secular world-view results when man’s reflective activities are given a dominant role in determining the understanding of human existence in which it is found”<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, according to Kaufman “when *feeling* is given a dominant place in shaping the interpretation of reality or the world, a religious world view results.”<sup>3</sup> He then distinguishes between a “religious” world view which is based on the centrality of feeling or affection and a “theistic” world view which is rooted in the volitional or feeling side of the self. It is in this third or theistic world view that we find the great emphasis on discontinuity and dissimilarity between God and world.

“In its emphasis on the transcendent God, theism differs sharply both from secularism, contented simply with life in this world, and religion, which perceives unusual depths and values and meanings in experience, but is not essentially committed to an independent, transcendent God.”<sup>4</sup>

But the modern theist is still averse to giving a proper conceptual delineation of the is-ness of God. He will tell us that the two orders (Creator and Creation) are generically different, the latter having no existence except by contingent dependence on the former, and the former existing by itself independent also of the latter. What they do not tell us is where and how this Creator God is. They just pre-suppose that the word “is” or “exists” is of self-evident meaning. They concentrate, as Gordon Kaufman does, on the difference in dependence. Creator and Creation are not inter-dependent. The dependence is one way. But they do not give enough attention to the two kinds of is-ness.

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1. For the Eastern Fathers it was difficult to conceive God as “somewhere” already in the 4th century. See the second theological oration of St. Gregory Nazianzen.
2. Gordon D. Kaufman: *Cod the Problem*. Harvard U.P., 1972, p. 210, He goes on to say: “By a secular view, I mean to indicate any position that understands man’s existence simply in terms of *this world* as it is given to our experience and especially as it is known in our science and philosophy.”
3. *ibid.* p. 214.
4. *ibid.* p. 221.

Some things can be said of this is-ness of God. First, the Eastern Fathers emphasize the incomprehensibility of the is-ness or *ousia* of God. To comprehend, to understand, is usually to see a reality as sharing certain properties with a class or species of other things or beings, so that if we know one member of the species, the other members can be known as belonging to the same species. Or we understand a reality in relation to its inter-actions with other realities, which inter-actions are predictable to a large extent.

In the case of God, there is no species-category into which God can be put, which category we would know by knowing one or more members of it.<sup>5</sup> Nor do we know how to predict God's behaviour just because we have seen how he acts in some cases in the past.

(2) The second of these propositions from Patristic thought that I would like to reiterate is this. While God's is-ness or *ousia* remains incomprehensible, his actions or operations do come down to us and we can experience and understand them. In fact, the fathers would say that these operations or *energeia* are the means through which we understand God at all.

The difficulty in this Eastern patristic distinction between the *ousia* and the *energeia* of God (or between his is-ness and his operations) shows up in the lack of clarity in seeing the relation between *ousia* and *energeia*. Does not most of our knowledge of the is-ness of existents come from our awareness of how they work? We know rain because we know how it works, not because we have a great penetration into the being of rain.

The *ousia* and the *energeia* cannot be two totally distinct realities. It is from the *ousia* that the *energeia* emerges and the latter is an expression of the former. This is what we mean when we say that God is love; it is because we have experienced God's loving actions or operations that we project love to the being of God.

But there is this difference—that in the case of existents both the *ousia* and the *energeia* are open to our senses, while in the case of God only some of the operations are.

And in fact we do have some difficulty in ascribing operations to an *ousia* that we do not behold. How do we know that a particular operation—say the up-rooting and falling of a tree on a particular house, killing a particular human being, is an act of God? We know that it was the wind which operated to uproot the tree; it was the falling tree which operated to kill the person. How then do we call that, or Jesus' healing of the man born blind, properly speaking an act of God?

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5. If a Christian says that we know a member of the species in Jesus Christ one has to answer (a) Jesus Christ is not simply God, but God-Man, and (b) what was revealed in Jesus Christ was more the true nature of man as the image of God, and not God Himself.

The concept of God's operation is bound to remain vague in so far as God's *ousia* remains hidden to us. The patristic notion of God's *energeia* is only partly clear. We understand that the Creation itself is God's *energeia* operating. But if that is so, then we must call every disease and every tidal wave an act of God. Cancer and blindness would also then be God's operations. At this point I can only point to the difficulty, not sort it out.

We know about God's operations, and from these we do get but a faint glimmer of God's *ousia*. But that *ousia* can still not be conceptually comprehended. It can be apprehended, responded to, trusted in, but not intellectually understood or explained.

(3) The third proposition I want to reiterate here is that God and world cannot be ultimately two, and that at that point we modern Christians have not been sufficiently fair to the Indian Philosopher Sankara's thought.

Those who say that God and world are two realities have to answer the question whether God-plus-world would be greater than God-by-himself. If *a* and *b* are two positive entities then by simple mathematical logic.

$$a + b > a$$

Even if we regard *b* as contained in *a* (like water in a vessel or like air in a balloon?) still  $a + b > a$ , which means that *a* can be added to, and there is something, namely  $a - b$  which is greater than *a*. If so then *a* cannot be God.

If we really mean what we say when we state that God is infinite, then we have to say how the world can be "outside" of God or "other than" God. How can infinity, which has no boundaries have an outside? Can something, like the world, be added to. Is there something called infinity plus X?

I therefore as a Christian am forced to agree with Sankara that God and World cannot be *ultimately* two. Not two, that means *advaita*. This is neither a simple monism nor pan-theism nor even a simple pan-en-theism. The not-two is a negative affirmation which I make on the basis both of logic and of intuition. I would like to work out this notion in greater detail and with more precision. I present it here in order to benefit from your wisdom in criticism.

(4) My fourth proposition is that the patristic notions of *diastema* and *metousia* as a pair of concepts can help us in overcoming in a very partial way the *aporia* connected with the God-World relationship. The concept of *diastema* comes from the old Arian-Eunomion controversy. The logic of the tradition of Arius, Aetius and Eunomius in the 4th century was clear. If Father and Son are two persons the latter having been born from the first, then the

Father must be logically as well as temporally prior to the Son, and that therefore there must have been a period when the Father existed and the Son did not; because the Father had to be there before the Son could be born. This Eunomian logic relentlessly argued that there was a then, when the Son was not—and therefore that there is a gap or *diastema* between the Father and Son. This gap is both temporal and spatial.

In facing this logic, St. Basil was the first to insist on the *adiastatic* or unextended nature of the God-head. His younger brother Gregory of Nyssa developed the concept philosophically. In the first place, if the Son had a beginning then certainly he is finite at one end of his existence, since it is bounded by a particular point in time when his existence began. This is what Eunomius claimed. He also claimed that there was a fixed interval or gap or lapse of time during which the Son was not, i. e. before his beginning. Now Gregory's clinching argument was as follows:

- (a) According to Eunomius, the Son had his beginning at a point in time A.
- (b) also according to him, there was a precise period of time when the Son was not, while the Father alone was—B.
- (c) if you go back the period of time B from the point in time A, you must get the time of origin of the Father.
- (d) therefore the Father had also a beginning in time, and therefore he is not *agennetos*, unoriginate which according to Eunomius, is the necessary quality of God. Thus the Father is not God.

This is not merely playing with words. Gregory drew from these reflections the dicta: (a) that there can be no *diastema* (i. e. gap, distension or extension) within the Godhead itself,

- (b) that everything in the created order is characterized by *diastema* or extension in space and time; and
- (c) that while there is a one-way *diastema* between World and God, there is no such the other way, i. e. between God and World.

These dicta continue to be useful conceptual tools in dealing with the Christian doctrine of Creation, and the Creator-Creation relationship. But in Gregory of Nyssa this *diastema* view is counter balanced by the *metousia* understanding, i. e. the being or existence of all existents is a participation or *metousia* in the *energeia* of God. While this participation applies to all existents in a general way, man participates in a preferred way, i. e. as icon or manifest presence, as mirror-image and as being-in-becoming.

And because of this distance-participation dialectic, the final vision of God is not of an objective "Uncreated light" as some exponents of Eastern Orthodox mysticism say, but rather as the reflection of the original in one's own perfected and growing being, as Gregory of Nyssa would insist.

While we thus affirm the discontinuity between God and World, in accordance with the Semitic tradition, we also affirm the continuity between them. The Christian doctrine is neither Spinozan nor Barthian. It holds continuity and discontinuity in dialectical tension

(5) My fifth point must sound quite ludicrous to some of my western Christian friends, who would perhaps seek to escape the problem by ascribing my peculiar view to my Indian cultural background.

But I do feel certain that we have in our conceptual grasp of reality over-emphasized the distinction between God and Man as two separate and totally other realities. The whole biblical tradition is redundant with affirmations to the contrary. If human beings (as well as 'angels') can be 'sons of God,' it takes a very flat mind to say that there is no generic (not numeral) identity between Father and Son. Nor does the concepts of image and likeness yield any meaning without something in common between original and image.

If I say that God and Man have become inseparably and permanently one in Jesus Christ, then still to insist that God and Man are totally other with nothing in common between them, seems somewhat perverse. If the old humanity has been condemned and overthrown and the new humanity of Jesus Christ as inseparably God-Man, has been established as Barth would say, then where is the ground for a secular humanity with secondary autonomy *in se* and *per se*? The humanity that seeks to exist apart from Jesus Christ is a condemned humanity. How then can we as Christians affirm something called 'secular' humanity?

The only humanity that can be affirmed as really existing is humanity inseparably united with God. I do not claim that only Christians have this united-with-God humanity. I regard the main specificity of the Christian not as the exclusive possession of this redeemed humanity which is now inseparably united to God in Christ; for me what makes me a Christian is my initiation into a community which *knows* the heart of this redeemed humanity and seeks to live by that knowledge and to impart it to all by life and love and word.

But my main point is not about the specificity of the Christian but about the dialectical, unconfused, inseparable unity between Man and God—not merely in the single individuality of the Nazarene, but in the whole of humanity which he assumed. The duality between God and Man should not be stressed to the point

where they become separated into two, for they have been indissolubly and inseparably united into One. True humanity does not exist except in that unity—irrespective of whether Man is conscious of that fact or not. God and Man are not totally other. They are totally united—so that humanity does not exist outside of union with God, and God does not 'exist' outside of the union with humanity.

(6) The sixth point has to do with the Incarnation of the Son of God and its trans-temporal effect upon all humanity in all space and time. I shall put forward as propositions the following for discussion:

- (a) *Truth manifest is God Incarnate.* Philosophy is not truth. It can only be ancillary to the quest for being grounded in the truth. Religion as a generic category does not exist. There are various traditions which show ways of being related to the one truth of the Son of God Incarnate.
- (b) The ultimate goal of all authentic religious quest is becoming consciously grounded in and nurtured by, the ultimate reality of the Son of God Incarnate, apprehended in different ways.
- (c) The Christian tradition offers us the way shown by the Son of God himself, but there are other ways of being related to the Son of God Incarnate. The Christian tradition itself is only imperfectly reflected and maintained in all existing Christian traditions, and sometimes elements of the Christian tradition are better maintained in other traditions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Liberalism, Marxism, etc. Christians have to learn from these.
- (d) Since the temporal event of the Incarnation is also an eternal event (the lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world), being grounded in and nurtured by the one comprehensive eternal-historical reality of Jesus Christ is possible in differing measures and degrees to peoples who lived temporally before, or geographically untouched by, the historical event of the Incarnation.
- (e) The *diastema* between God and Man remains a fact, but it has been ultimately overcome when God became Man and no *diastema* can in principle exist between God and Man since they are inseparably (though unconfusedly) united in Christ Jesus. This ultimate overcoming of the *diastema* means being united more and more closely with Him in whom there is no *diastema*.

### Conclusion

The conclusion of this brief paper is merely to deflate all pretensions to finality in any propositional statement of truth about God. The secularization movement of the west, which is now being co-opted inside theology, is not capable of giving us a philosophically respectable notion of God as it claims to be able to do. If "modern man" cannot deal with the patristic concept of God because of his metaphysical reluctance to do so, then it is necessary for "modern man" to realize that he has no philosophically respectable concept of either God or of this world in his so-called secular philosophy either. He is being intellectually mediocre by evading the problem. The patristic notion remains so far the best conceptual grasp, provided it is held in an apophatic-kataphatic dialectic, and not as propositional truth which can be verified or falsified.

# Science, Development and Power Confrontation.

The U. N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) was the last of the big U. N. General Conferences—Environment, Population, Women, Habitat and now Science and Technology for Development. There were some 6,000 of us around—in various capacities, national delegations, U. N. related bodies inter-governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and so on, meeting August 20th to 31st, 1979 at the capacious Stadthalle in Vienna.

The pattern was quite familiar to those who have been to U. N. Conferences—some 200 long speeches in plenary while all the real work goes on in caucuses, corridors and confrontations in committees.

The key issue was obvious from the beginning. The UNESCO office of Statistics (Science and Technology Division) had put out several interesting files of data. The most impressive was one with estimates of global efforts in Research and Development in Science and Technology. Some highlights:

1. Total number of Scientists and Engineers engaged in Research and Development (based on 1974 figures, in 104 countries).

	<i>World Total</i>	<i>Developed countries</i>	<i>Developing countries</i>
(a) No. of Scientists & Engineers	2,978 million	2,798 million	180 million
Percentage	100%	93.9%	6.1%
(b) Expenditure	\$ 101, 785 mill	\$ 99, 158 mill	\$ 2, 627 mill
Percentage	100%	97.4%	2.6%
(c) Scientists & Engineers—per million population.	1019	2579	98

To put it another way 94% of the world's Scientists and Engineers engaged in research and development (in 1974) work for the 37% of world population which constitutes the industrialized world, while the remaining 63% of the population in the developing countries have only 6% of the total number of research scientists.

Power in modern society comes from Science and Technology. And its distribution is now so lop-sided, that justice cannot be established on our globe without changing the picture of scientific-technological power. But how to do it? By starting a new U. N. Secretariat for that? Thank God UNCSTD did not choose that path. Instead they agreed to create a special fund for supporting R & D projects in developing countries. But confrontation soon ensued on questions like: Who controls the fund? To whom does it report? How much money to put into it? Who pays? Should it be voluntary or taxation? How would it be distributed? The rich nations had come with an agreement among themselves to stay around a 200 mill dollar fund, while the developing countries wanted to 2000 mill dollar fund. The present gap between the 37% rich and the 63% poor is (on a 1974 estimate) 96, 531 million dollars a year in R & D- if 200 million dollars per year are added to the two-third world R & D budget, the gap would still be 96, 331 million dollars. Would't that be adequate? The funny thing is that even the \$200 mill is not to be provided in one year, but over a period of ten years!

So if the 63% of the Two Third World agreed finally to a 250 million dollar figure, it shows how much this big conference, which itself cost some 50 million dollars achieved in two weeks of meeting!

Other important facts that came through:

#### 1. Distribution of personnel in R & D and expenses for R & D

	Personnel	Expenses
North America	19.1%	35.3%
South America	1.3%	0.8%
Africa	0.9%	0.5%
E. Europe (excluding USSR)	10.9%	6.89%
W. Europe	12.9%	23.79%
U. S. S. R.	39.3%	21.4%
Oceania	1%	1.2%

Clearly the market-economy developed, countries spend more money (for equipment and salaries) per research scientists than the socialist countries.

2. Half of Research and Development scientists in the world are employed by Transnational Corporations.

3. About half a million research scientists and technologists are employed for military purposes-science and technology for mutual destruction.

4. Unless the developing countries get sufficient resources and personnel for setting up their own science and technology research and development it is not possible to abolish poverty, injustice, malnutrition, illiteracy, ill-health and so on.

5. Scientific-technological information is, in its most crucial aspects, still private property. In fact in order to make money by exploiting others, scientific-technological information is more important than capital. And that information is now in the hands of a minority, despite the fact that some 3 million scientific-technological papers are published each year.

6. It is not simply that some information has to be purchased at high prices; it is often the technology minus some crucial bits of information that can be purchased. So that little bits of technology can continue to be used for exploitation for a long time.

7. Developing countries have not sufficiently built up the capacity even to absorb and utilize the information and skills available in the published literature.

8. It is good to avoid confrontation and to seek the way of co-operation as the U. S. delegation said in the Conference. But by co-operation some people mean perpetual dependence on the strong by the weak. Even confrontation of the strong by the weak did not produce much effect at UNCSTD.

## News and Views

### **Faith and Order Consultation takes up an old controversy (EPS)**

Under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order commission Thelogians from different confessional traditions met 23-27 May to consider the so called 'filioque clause' an issue which separates the Western churches from the Orthodox traditions of the East. The difference concerns the wording of the Nicene Creed. While in the East the third article of the Creed says of the Holy Spirit that he proceeds from the Father, in the West the words 'and from the Son' (filioque) have been added.

### **Nuclear Moratorium urged by Scientists and Theologians (EPS)**

A five year moratorium on constructing new nuclear power plants was recommended in Massachusetts, U. S. A. on 23 July, by a conference of over 300 Scientists and Theologians called together by the World Council of Churches. Purpose of the moratorium should be to encourage and enable wide participation in public debate on the risks, costs and benefits of nuclear energy in all countries directly concerned.

### **Houses for cyclone hit**

The Andhra Pradesh Relief and Rehabilitation Project, sponsored by the Orthodox Syrian Church of India has spent over Rs. 500,000 on rehabilitation works in the two villages of Andhra Pradesh which were ravaged by storm and tidal waves in 1977. Under this project, the construction of about 66 houses, each costing Rs. 6000, and a community hall costing Rs. 35,000 had been completed. On October 15, 1979 His excellency K. C. Abraham Governor of Andhra Pradesh declared the two villages opened with the new names St. Thomas Nagar and Christurajapuram. The money came entirely from Indian sources.

### **Children's Welfare Fund**

In accordance with the decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod that met in Feb. 79, the Orthodox Syrian Church of India is collecting a welfare fund to start and run institutions for orphaned, destitute and handicapped children. Rs. 200,000 have been already collected. The target is Rs. 800,000, all of it to come from members of the Indian Church.

### **Russian Church Trains Women for Service**

Leningrad Geneva (EPS) The Russian Orthodox Church has for the first time admitted women to its training institutes. Since the beginning of September, 25 women, have, in effect, been studying at the church's newly created advanced school of music in Leningrad. After a three year course the women can become directors of church music. "This is the first time in all our history that our church has trained women for a ministry in the church." Archbishop Kirill of Vyborg told EPS in Geneva, where he is participating in the Executive Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

These future choir directors who come from all over the Soviet Union are between 18 and 32 years of age. All have completed at least their secondary studies and the majority of them already have musical experience. For the course they will study musicology, the art of singing, and theology. The Russian Orthodox Church has provided scholarships for the students.

An experimental class was launched last year. This gave encouraging results. The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church then decided to set up this advanced school of music that depends administratively on the theological seminary and the academy of Leningrad where Archbishop Kirill is the rector. The school counts at present on 13 professors and assistants.

### **The Church in China**

The most distinguishing thing about the (3rd) World Congress on Religion and Peace held at Princeton, N. J. (U. S. A.) in August 1979 was perhaps the presence of delegates from China representing Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Their presence, under the leadership of the revered 64-year old Bishop K. H. Ting, was the sign of a new era in the development of religious freedom in China, severely curtailed since the Cultural Revolution. Bishop Ting reported that religious groups who would take an anti-imperialist and patriotic stand and would agree to support the programme of the four modernisations (industry, agriculture, defence and science/technology) would be given a measure of religious freedom and some of the places of worship taken away during the cultural revolution would now be handed over to such groups. Bishop Ting, formerly Anglican now leader of the Chinese non-Catholics is a well-known ecumenical figure, who has not appeared in the west for the last 20 years. He is now Director of Religious Research at Nanking University.

The aged (86 years) Roman Catholic Bishop Zhang Jaishu is also active and is allowed to celebrate mass. It is more difficult for the Roman Catholics, since the Chinese Government would not allow

the Roman Curia or Pope to exercise any jurisdiction over the Chinese Catholics. The Roman Catholics in China are divided on this issue. Some have accepted the restriction on Roman jurisdiction, and the churches are more likely to be handed over to such groups, whereas the group that wants no compromise on Roman jurisdiction will probably have to stay underground.

The groups that have come to an understanding with the Chinese Government are (a) the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and (b) the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

In a recent publication from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, the following is worth citing :—

“.....Christian life continues in spite of all; the sacraments are celebrated in private homes; parents teach the faith to their children. What is true of Christianity is undoubtedly true also of Buddhism and Islamism (sic) with the proper nuances” .....

#### **American Orthodox and Catholics on Marriage.**

The 19th North and South American encounter between Roman Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox theologians held in December 1978 in New York, discussed the question of marriage, and issued a joint Statement. The Orthodox permit divorce and remarriage, only in certain exceptional circumstances and by proper authority. The Roman Catholic Church knows only the annulment of unconsummated marriages. The Orthodox administer the sacrament of marriage only to members of the Orthodox Church and therefore do not consecrate marriages with non-members. The Roman Catholics have provision for mixed marriages. This creates problems that need to be investigated. Understanding of marriage is based on different conceptions in the two traditions, but this does not affect the basic sacramental nature of matrimony in both traditions.

#### **The Crisis of The World Council of Churches.**

There seem to prevail several different interpretations regarding what transpired at the Jamaica Central Committee meeting of the W. C. C. The prominent French newspaper *Le Monde*, for example, felt that Philip Potter, the General Secretary represented not only the “third world”, but also the “horizontalist” theology which emphasizes change in society as the Church’s primary task, versus Lukas Vischer, the Director of Faith and Order representing not only European Christendom but also the more strictly “verticalist” theology which gives first place to man’s relation to God and only second place to social change.

Others feel that this is a gratuitous interpretation. Potter is not certainly a "horizontalist" in the sense above. But he has been a champion of liberation movements especially in Southern Africa, where as Lukas Vischer probably felt that too much emphasis was given in W. C. C. programme to social and political questions and not enough to profound theological questions. This too is unfair. The fact is that socio-economic issues invariably get more attention in the secular press than strictly theological issues, and that thus a lop-sided image of the W. C. C. is thus created in the popular mind.

There was a lot of unnecessary nervousness on the part of the western churches, it was widely felt, about the apparent loss of western control of the ecumenical movement, despite the fact that it is still largely financed by the west. That accounts in large part for the subterfuge of emotional propaganda and wilful misrepresentation that characterized the Jamaica crisis of the W. C. C. It is also significant that the South African and Israeli Governments are reported to have taken a keen interest and probably spent a lot of money in connection with this supposed "theological" crisis.

### 1979—The year of St. Basil the Great.

The Orthodox Church of Greece has proclaimed 1979 as the Year of St. Basil. The great church father died in 379 A. D. i. e. 1600 years ago. His role in the defence of the faith of the Church against Arian and Eunomian heretics was perhaps even more heroic than that of St. Athanasius his senior contemporary (296—373 A. D.) who died six years before St. Basil, and was thirtyfour years older. St. Basil was born 5 years after the Nicean Council; but consummated the fight against the extreme form of Arianism called the Eunomian heresy, as also against those who denied the deity of the Holy Spirit. In this sense St. Basil was the great clarifier of Trinitarian Orthodoxy. We wish to devote several articles to the great Cappadocian Father this year.

### The Orthodox in the W. C. C.

W. C. C. General Secretary Philip Potter gave some time last year an interview on the place of the Orthodox Churches in the fellowship of the W. C. C. (published in *La Vie Protestante*, Geneva). The question asked was:

"The Orthodox feel a bit unwanted at the W. C. C. It is normal that the Catholic Church, even though somewhat an "outsider" is often more close to us than the Orthodox, in spite of their being members of the W. C. C. for long years. What do you think"?

Potter's reply (translated from the French)

"I see several reasons for this, which I will state rather loosely:

"First there is a historical reason. Catholics and Protestants have a common Latin mentality, while the Orthodox have a Greek mentality. In Europe, the secular division between the East and the West is more political and cultural than theological and ecclesiastical.

"The Orthodox find themselves enclosed within their national frontiers, except for the Diaspora which they do not regard as representative. They are quite numerous in the world (50 millions in the USSR) but politically and culturally, they do not carry the same weight in the W. C. C. as some other churches.

"The Catholics and the Protestants on the other hand, are partners in all countries (not in Latin America, Poland or Scandinavia, Editor) Further, and it troubles me a little, the Reformation churches especially western ones, seems a bit seduced by the temporal and spiritual might of Rome. \*

"If for the Orthodox, dialogue with other churches is not easy (and vice versa) it is not easy among themselves either. Theologically, for example, the divisions among Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians belong to the past; in any case, the Orthodox have not yet been able to find the means to overcome these divisions. One can say that it is thanks to their participation in the ecumenical movement that they have been motivated to search for an identity that they lack, through a future council.

"For me, whatever others may say, the presence of the Orthodox is essential for the W. C. C. Not only because it is a Church coming from the East, but also because of all its spiritual riches of which we have great need".

**Editor's Comment:** General Secretary Philip Potter had forgotten for the moment that the proposal for a W. C. C. first came from the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1920 and that several Orthodox Churches are founder-members of the W. C. C. If the Protestant Churches feel that the W. C. C. is theirs, and that the Orthodox are there because they needed by the Protestants, I am sure that the Orthodox can only feel alienated and insulted.

We know that non-importance of the Orthodox in the W. C. C., strangely enough, is a phenomenon that dates from after 1961 when their presence became numerically significant. One would almost suspect a concerted effort on the part of some to reduce their importance because of political and cultural insecurities among western Christians.

Dr. Visser't Hooft was not Orthodox in his thinking, but his heart was always warm and he held the Orthodox in high respect even while disagreeing with them. This had hardly been the case since his time.

I presume that the correspondent of *La Vie Protestante* misunderstood Dr. Potter's words about the Orthodox• searching for an identity. That I think is mainly a Protestant problem which often makes dialogue difficult with them. So much so that, after a long series of discussions between Catholics and Evangelicals in West Germany, the evangelical lack of standardization of faith emerged as a major issue, and the evangelicals had almost arbitrarily to choose the Confessio Augustana as their standard. Many other Protestants would find that standard difficult to accept, and are engaged in writing new standard confessions all the time. The Orthodox identity is infinitely more clear.

And on this Latin-Greek business, Philip Potter is too carelessly European in his thinking. True the Graeco-Latin civilization was the Imperial matrix within which Christianity expanded within the west (which included who later became European Orthodox and European Catholic). And the Christian heritage indelibly bears a Hellenic imprint; no amount of theological juggling can get rid of the Greek element in authentic Christianity. Neither can the Semitic element. The two existed together from the beginning and are inextricably intertwined.

But Christianity is not just either Greek or Latin. That is part of the European hybris, which Philip Potter, being an educated Afro-American need not have shared. The Fathers, of the Church, most of whom wrote in Greek, were rarely of Greek nationality. I am not English because I speak and write English. The Orthodox tradition should not be confused with hellenic civilization or Byzantine imperial Christianity of the later councils.

The problem of the Orthodox in the W. C. C. today is a staffing problem, behind which there lies a spiritual problem. It is true that the Orthodox do not have many competent people to spare for the staff work in Geneva. But it is also true that competent Orthodox are unwilling to work in the spiritually arid atmosphere of Geneva, where an Orthodox spirituality can hardly be practiced. Orthodoxy fits ill with programme-oriented bureaucracy. It flourishes only in a worshipping community living together in love.

Eventually the ecumenical movement will have to go that way—of life together in small communities, with at least three different ways of worship and spirituality (Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic) clear in identity, but open for common life, work and worship. It might be a few years before the ecumenical movement assimilates this insight.

We Apologise to our Readers  
for the delay in putting out the  
July and October issues this year



# THE STAR OF THE EAST

THE STAR OF THE EAST is an Indian Orthodox ecumenical quarterly published under the editorial responsibility of Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Gregorios of Delhi (formerly Fr. Paul Verghese). It is the continuation of an occasional journal carrying the same name originally published by the late Rev. Dr. C. T. Eapen of the Orthodox Syrian Church of India. The journal will deal with contemporary issues of ecumenism, especially from the perspective of the Orthodox Churches, and will carry news about the major events in the life of these Churches.

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